

Serial No. 10/602,685

Attorney Docket No. 26B-017

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NOV 17 2006

1. (Currently amended) A leathered steering wheel comprising:
 - a ring portion having a covered layer on which a leather layer is arranged;
 - the leather layer provided with a plurality of leather materials, each leather material having a main portion and end portions defined on both ends of each leather material in a longitudinal direction thereof, wherein the leather materials are joined to one another along a circumferential direction of said ring portion by stitching at said end portions of the leather materials,
 - a thin portion being formed at each end portion of the leather materials by thinning a back side of said end portion such that a thickness of the thin portion at a stitching portion of said end portion to portion, which is to be stitched to an end portion of the adjacent leather material is lowered material, is reduced relative to the main portion, wherein
 - a stitching thread is located within the thin portion, and the stitching thread is exposed on a back side of the leather material at the stitching portion, and
 - a length L1 from the stitching portion to an end face of said leather material is set to be substantially equal to or slightly smaller than a thickness t1 of said leather material at a main portion thereof, so that said end face of said end portion is brought into abutment with said covered layer of said ring portion.
 2. (Original) The leathered steering wheel according to claim 1, wherein said thin portion of said leather material is set such that a thickness t3 at said end face of said leather material is substantially made larger than a thickness t2 at said stitching portion.

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3. (Previously presented) The leathered steering wheel according to claim 1, wherein the length L1 is in a range from 1.0 mm to 1.5 mm.

4. (Previously presented) The leathered steering wheel according to claim 2, wherein the length L1 is in a range from 1.0 mm to 1.5 mm, and the thickness t2 is in a range from 0.6 mm to 1.5 mm.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously presented) The leathered steering wheel according to claim 1, wherein a recess is formed in the back side of the leather material, and the exposed stitching on the back side of the leather material is located in the recess.